REMARKS

Upon entry of the foregoing Amendment, claims 1-56 are pending in the application. Claims 1-8, 10-15, 18, 22-23, 25-39, and 41-56 have been amended. Claim 40 is cancelled. No claims are newly added. Applicants believe that this Amendment does not add new matter. In view of the foregoing Amendment and following Remarks, allowance of all the pending claims is requested.

EXAMINER INTERVIEW

Applicants thank Examiner Wozniak for granting Applicants' representative the courtesy of an Examiner Interview on August 20, 2007. During the Examiner interview, Applicants' representative discussed the claims in light of the rejections as set forth below in further detail.

Applicants also note that the Examiner has suggested correcting the previous misnumbering of the claims by amending the claim numbering, as provided by the foregoing Amendment. As a result, the following discussion of the objections and rejections raised by the Examiner are based on the renumbered, amended claims.

CLAIM OBJECTIONS

The Examiner has objected to claims 3, 22, 34, and 44-56 because of alleged informalities. Applicants note that the claims have been amended as indicated above, and that the amended claims fully address the objections that the Examiner has raised. Accordingly, Applicants request that the Examiner withdraw this objection to the claims.

NON-STATUTORY DOUBLE PATENTING REJECTION

The Examiner has provisionally rejected claims 1-56 under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as allegedly being unpatentable over claims 1-40 of copending Application No. 10/452,147.

Applicants will consider filing a terminal disclaimer to overcome this rejection once otherwise patentable subject matter has been determined. Applicants note that the filing of a

terminal disclaimer to obviate a rejection based on non-statutory double patenting is not an admission of the propriety of the rejection. *See Quad Environmental Technologies Corp. v. Union Sanitary District*, 946 F.2d 870 (Fed. Cir. 1991).

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-4, 6, 17-18, 21-23, and 27 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6.615,172 to Bennett et al. ("Bennett") in view of "A Distributed Architecture for Cooperative Spoken Dialogue Agents with Coherent Dialogue State and History to Lin et al. ("Lin"). This rejection is improper for at least the reason that the Examiner has failed to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness, as Bennett and Lin, either alone or in combination, fail to disclose, teach, or suggest all the features of the claimed invention.

More particularly, neither Bennett nor Lin, either alone or in combination, disclose, teach, or suggest at least the feature of "a natural language speech processing system that . . . selects at least one domain agent . . . having access to services associated with each of [a] plurality of domain agents," as recited in claim 1, for example. The Examiner acknowledges that "Bennett does not explicitly disclose . . . selecting and forwarding a query to . . . executable dialog agents associated with different domains." Office Action at 5. However, the Examiner alleges that "Lin . . . discloses a user interface agent that enables query forwarding to a particular dialog agent." Office Action at 5. Applicants disagree with the Examiner's assessment.

Specifically, Lin does not disclose, teach, or suggest the aforementioned feature for at least the reason that Lin expressly disavows centralized multi-domain spoken dialogue systems that include agents having access to each other's services. In particular, Lin expresses concern regarding such systems because "it will be very difficult to extend . . . to new domains," for example, "because the dialogue has to be switched across many different domains smoothly." Lin at Section 2.1. As a result, Lin takes a contrary approach, implementing a distributed architecture in which "domain switching should be executed" whenever a "new [spoken

dialogue agent] . . . is different from the current [spoken dialogue agent]." Lin at Section 3.3. Thus, Lin specifically relates to a system in which domain agents operate independently of each other, and in which a current agent is disconnected whenever domain switching occurs. Accordingly, for at least these reasons, Lin fails to disclose, teach, or suggest at least the feature of "a natural language speech processing system that . . . selects at least one domain agent . . . having access to services associated with each of [a] plurality of domain agents," as recited in claim 1, for example.

Accordingly, for at least the foregoing reasons, Bennett and Lin, either alone or in combination, fail to disclose, teach, or suggest every feature recited in claim 1. Accordingly, the rejection is improper and must be withdrawn. Claims 2-4, 6, 17-18, 21-23, and 27 depend from and add features to claim 1. Thus, the rejection of these claims is likewise improper and must be withdrawn for at least the same reasons.

The Examiner has also rejected claims 7-12, 19, 44-46, and 51-56 as allegedly being unpatentable over Bennett in view of Lin, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,937,977 to Gerson ("Gerson"), claims 5, 13-16, 28-29, 31-37, 40-41, and 43 as allegedly being unpatentable over Bennett in view of Lin, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,185,535 to Hedin et al. ("Hedin"), claim 20 as allegedly being unpatentable over Bennett in view of Lin, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,420,975 to DeLine et al. ("DeLine"), claims 24-26 as allegedly being unpatentable over Bennett in view of Lin, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,980,092 to Turnbull et al. ("Turnbull"), claims 30, 38-39, and 42 as allegedly being unpatentable over Bennett in view of Lin, further in view of Hedin and further in view of Gerson, and claims 47-50 as allegedly being unpatentable over Bennett in view of Lin, further in view of Gerson and further in view of Hedin. These rejections are improper for at least the reason that the Examiner has failed to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness, as the references relied upon, either alone or in combination, fail to disclose, teach, or suggest all the features of the claimed invention.

More particularly, for at least the reasons given above, neither Bennett nor Lin, either alone or in combination, disclose, teach, or suggest at least the feature of "a natural language speech processing system that . . . selects at least one domain agent . . . having access to

services associated with each of [a] plurality of domain agents," as recited in claim 1, for example. None of Gerson, Hedin, DeLine, or Turnbull cure the deficiencies of Bennett and Lin discussed above. For at least this reason, the references relied upon, either alone or in combination, fail to disclose, teach, or suggest all of the features recited in claim 1.

Claims 28 and 44 include features similar to those set forth in claim 1. Claims 5, 7-16, 19-20, 24-26, 28-39, 40-43, 45-56 depend from and add features to one of claims 1, 28, and 44. Thus, the rejections of these claims are likewise improper and must be withdrawn for at least the same reasons.

CONCLUSION

Having addressed each of the foregoing rejections, it is respectfully submitted that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the application is in condition for allowance. Notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Date: **August 30, 2007**

Respectfully submitted,

By: _____

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